

### **This I Believe**

Imagine if one day, you wake up and find yourself not in your bed, not in the familiar settings your eyes are accustomed to, and surrounded by new faces. How would you react? I am unable to picture such a scenario, nor adequately describe how I would feel, but for me, I try and I try very hard. I try to feel the pain of losing *everything*, try to feel the sense of despair, but is it possible to truly understand what something is without experiencing the opposite? Yet, some things when lost never come back. I cannot afford to lose many things around me, and hence, I believe that learning how to treasure the people and the most basic things around us, is very important.

I am a 15 year old, Secondary 3 student. For me, Secondary 3 was a large leap from Secondary 2; there were many changes around me, but there is one that particularly struck me – not the curriculum change, or the increased workload, but the change in teachers. In Secondary 1 and 2, I had the same Mathematics teacher. She was a good teacher, an excellent one in fact, but she was more than that to us, and more so to me. Her incessant reminders, her good eye to see if we were feeling down, and her personality touched and influenced me greatly. There was one time when I was having a particularly rough day, and she actually saw through me. She sounded me out, talked to me, and really made me reflect.

It was only after a change in teachers, did I realize how much I depended on her and how her presence alone was an assurance. What then have I done, as her student, to show that I cared and treasured her efforts? There was nothing reasonable I could do to ‘keep’ her as my teacher, but it was that hurt, that realization that I had taken her for granted that pierced me deeply.

Recently, I have also watched many videos about what the concept of ‘democracy’ meant to people from different countries like Columbia, Iran and Ethiopia. To them, democracy means simple things like having the right to choose, to speak and to breathe. I cried. I thought back to Singapore. Why, although we are already so blessed, do people complain and clamour for changes? For that, I feel ashamed; ashamed at how insignificant and shallow we are making ourselves to be. We are dependent on our government, but yet many do not treasure it. Then again, do I really understand what it means to be a Singaporean? I doubt so.

And for all of these, I have resolved to treasure what I have, from the tiniest bit of love I own, to my family and friends. They may not be perfect, and change may be needed, but at least for the little things that have been taken for granted, I believe that we must learn to see and appreciate them before they are lost.

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